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About Archaeological Research of Some Medieval Fortifications of Azerbaijan

Medieval fortifications, fortified settlements and castles were absolutely important part of history. In last decade archaeologists were led scientific researches in different parts of Azerbaijan Republic, studied different type of fortresses and fortifications. Medieval fortresses of Azerbaijan were built at strategical geographical areas. Our article dedicated to some medieval fortresses which studied during archaeological excavations. Azerbaijani castles and fortresses which built in the middle ages were historically and architecturally important for national defensive history. Azerbaijani archaeologists investigated at the medieval castles and the results of some researches were concluded in this article. Fortifications, which have an important place among the medieval monuments of Azerbaijan, were the main object of research in the monograph. For the first time, medieval fortification-type monuments were systematically classified and studied according to this classification. The defensive structures built during this period to prevent various attacks and to protect the territorial integrity of the country are distinguished by their grandeur. Among the fortified monuments of Azerbaijan, settlements and fortified cities with defensive walls, defensive walls, towers, towers, guard posts, military camps, strategic mountain passes and passes of special importance have been scientifically studied in the article. The results of archaeological researches were coordinated with the information provided by written sources, important scientific results were obtained, a number of issues were clarified as a result of systematic study of the history of Azerbaijan and its defensive monuments. The results of the research show that the defense work was perfectly organized in the territory of Azerbaijan in the medieval period. In fact, the political situation in the region has made it necessary. The fact that such magnificent monuments of the local population have left us a monument has served as a kind of source for the study of the history, archaeology, architecture, martial arts and other historical issues of that period. The fortifications of Azerbaijan show the prosperity of its medieval architecture, too.

Keywords: *Azerbaijan, Medieval fortresses, middle ages, castles, Chiraggala castle, Gulustan castle, Zurnabad castle*

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Про археологічні дослідження в деяких середньовічних фортецях Азербайджану

Середньовічні укріплення, укріплені поселення та замки були абсолютно важливою частиною історії. В останнє десятиліття археологи вели наукові дослідження в різних частинах Азербайджанської Республіки, вивчали різні типи фортець та укріплень. Середньовічні фортеці Азербайджану будувались у стратегічних географічних районах. Наша стаття присвячена деяким середньовічним фортецям, які вивчались під час археологічних розкопок. Азербайджанські замки та фортеці, побудовані в середні віки, мали історичне та архітектурне значення для національної історії оборони. Азербайджанські археологи досліджували середньовічні замки, і результати деяких досліджень були зроблені в цій статті. Укріплення, які посідають важливе місце серед середньовічних пам'яток Азербайджану, були основним об'єктом дослідження в монографії. Вперше середньовічні пам'ятки фортифікаційного типу систематично класифікувались та вивчались за цією класифікацією. Оборонні споруди, побудовані в цей період для запобігання різним атакам та захисту територіальної цілісності країни, відрізняються своєю величиною. Серед укріплених пам'яток Азербайджану в статті науково вивчені поселення та укріплені міста з оборонними стінами, оборонними стінами, вежами, вежами, сторожовими постами, військовими таборами, стратегічними гірськими перевалами та перевалами, що мають особливе значення. Результати археологічних досліджень узгоджувались з інформацією, наданою письмовими джерелами, отримувались важливі наукові результати, з'ясувався ряд питань в результаті систематичного вивчення історії Азербайджану та його оборонних пам'яток. Результати дослідження показують, що оборонні роботи були прекрасно організовані на території Азербайджану в середньовічний період. Насправді політична ситуація в регіоні зробила це необхідним. Той факт, що такі чудові пам'ятники місцевого населення залишили нам пам'ятник, послужив своєрідним джерелом для вивчення історії, археології, архітектури, бойових мистецтв та інших історичних проблем того періоду. Укріплення Азербайджану також свідчать про процвітання його середньовічної архітектури.

Keywords: *Азербайджан, середньовічні фортеці, середньовіччя, замки, замок Чирагала, замок Гулустан, замок Зурнабад*



Introduction.

The forts, built from ancient times, were built with square or circular towers around the cities in later times, with the improvement of construction work and the availability of cheap labor. The thickness of the castle walls is usually 3/1 of the height. The emergence of artillery in the XIV-XV centuries necessitated a change in the structure of the castles, and as a result of this factor, the castle walls began to be built lower and thicker (Fig. 10).

Experts note that three types of medieval castles have been identified in Azerbaijan.

1. Temple-type towers
2. Feudal city-type castles
3. Shelter-type towers

DISCUSSION.

Gulustan Fortress, one of the shelter-type fortresses of Azerbaijan, is a unique fortress built in the style of Shirvan-Absheron architecture on the territory of Shamakhi region, 3 km north-west of Shamakhi, 200 meters above the village of Boyuk Khinisli, on Gulustan Mountain. The front fortification of the fortress was built on the slope of the mountain, and Naringalasi on the top (ASE, 1982: 118). All paths leading to the fortress were blocked by impassable fortress walls, so the only road was in the south-western part of the mountain (Fig. 2).

The Govurgala monument is located 2 km from Yenikend village in Guba region between the Agchay and Mohuj rivers.

The southern side of the plateau, where the monument covers an area of 7,200 m², is steep, and the slopes are steep. J.A.Khalilov was engaged in the research of this fortress in 1991. Archaeologists believe that the 3-4 rows of river stones found here are the remains of castle walls. Ceramic samples made on a potter's wheel from a layer up to 0.5 meters were found. Researchers have come to the general conclusion that Govurgala belongs to the VII-VIII centuries (Khalilov, 1991: 45).

During the years of independence, J.A.Khalilov (Khalilov, 1991: 100-102), T.I.Akhundov (Akhundov, 2009: 61-63), A.Sh.Orujov (Orujov, 1995: 17) were engaged in the study of the Yusifkhantepe monument. have been. The monument is located at an altitude of 400 meters above sea level, 3 km north-east of Galajik village of Gusar region, on a hill with an area of 4500 m². T.I.Akhundov notes that the foundation of the castle walls, the cultural

layer of which is 2 meters thick, is made of river stones, and the main part is made of raw bricks measuring 45-50x 22x10 cm (Akhundov, 2009: 62). The thickness of the clay solution used to join the river stones and bricks are 2 cm. In the 1.2-meter-thick sections of the wall, two rows of bricks were laid across the masonry, two rows in a straight position (Khalilov, 1991: 101).

Remains of towers were found on both sides of the gate on the south-east. The presence of additional fortification traces found on the north-western side of the fort shows that more attention was paid to the organization of defense in this direction. A number of buildings with clay floors were found inside the fort walls. The inconsistency of the walls made of river stones below the floor level led the researchers to conclude that the construction work was carried out in two stages (Khalilov, 1991: 102).

Archaeologists date the first stage to the third and sixth centuries, and the second to the sixth and eighth centuries. Researchers also note that there was a short-lived settlement here in the XV-XVI centuries (Khalilov, 1991: 102).

One of the fortresses that existed within the borders of Gusar region is Shoranpel fortress located on a hill 8-12 meters high in the territory of Chatgun village. Archaeologist Orujov shows that the area of the monument, which is 1.90-2.25 meters thick, is 120x60 meters. The walls of the fortress are made of river stones reinforced with clay mortar. They determined that there were towers in the castle. The distance between these towers is 5 meters, and the diameter of the towers is 3 meters. The height of the protected part of the towers built of river stones is 0.6 meters. A.Sh.Orujov attributed the history of Shoranpel fortress to IV-VIII centuries.

Chiraggala was built on a large rock in the territory of Siyazan region, 1.5 km south-east of Carah village, on the Gilgilchay dam.

The castle was built in accordance with the relief of the area, the separate parts of which are indented and protruding and look oval. The presence of a steep ravine on the north-eastern side did not require a wall (Fig. 1).

According to one source, the castle has 13 towers and 13 other sources. All the towers have a semicircular shape and decide on an area of 6-8 m² (Aliyev, 1994: 44).

The distance between the towers built on the west side is 17-30 meters, on the north-eastern

wall 15 meters, and the height of the surviving part is 5-11 meters. The main tower, one side of which is semicircular, is built on the highest part of the rock.

The first of the building remains found in two places inside the castle is 10 meters long and 4 meters wide. Each room of the second house, which consists of 5 rooms, is 5 meters long and 3.5 meters wide, and the surviving height of the walls is 0.7 meters. According to A.A.Aliyev, part of these rooms was the residence of the defenders of the fortress, and the other part was a warehouse for storing food and ammunition (Aliyev, 1994: 44).

Zurnabad fortress is a fortress built 5-6 km away from Zurnabad village on the left bank of the Ganja river, surrounded by mountains on all sides and distinguished by its grandeur. For the first time archeological researches were carried out here by A.M.Mammadov. In his monograph "Ancient Ganja", published in 2014, the scientist writes that the construction of the fortress corresponds to the period of the Mongol occupation. Because during the Mongol occupation of Azerbaijan, while agriculture was in decline, livestock, especially horse breeding and sheep breeding, was developed. In connection with this, the cattle-breeding population, which gained a lot of wealth, retreated to the mountains to protect their wealth and created safe settlements for themselves (Mammadov, 2014: 48).

Archaeologists conducted archeological researches here and came to the conclusion that Zurnabad fortress is one of the feudal fortresses of XIII-XIV centuries due to its construction features (Fig. 3).

Inside the castle, the first of the two surviving rooms has a diameter of 4.9 meters, a wall thickness of 1 meter, the height of the entrance door is 1.8 meters, the height of the room itself is 3.5 meters, and the second is 3.2 meters wide, 4.5 meters long and the height of the room and 3.5 meters. A.M.Mammadov writes about Namardgala, which is a secret way to descend to Shamkirchay river, "Namardgala monument protects feudal rulers from the enemy, strengthens the defense, protects the surrounding farmers and cattle-breeding population and Zayam-Chaldash-Sabetkechmez-Arisu-Galakend-Nakhchivan-passing through the area, Chaygarishan - Goyabakhan Pass - was built to control the road around Lake Goycha to

Nakhchivan and known to the local population through Nakhchivan (Mammadov, 2014: 48-49).

Gulustan castle was built at the foot of Murovdagh in the territory of Goranboy region, 2 km from Gulustan village, on the bank of Injachay, on a mountain 1700 meters above sea level (Fig. 7; 8; 9).

The thickness of the castle walls varies in different parts. In the north-western part, the walls are built of high and hard rocks, so the thickness of the walls does not exceed 80-90 cm, taking into account the low probability of attack. On the contrary, in the southern part, the wall is 1-1.5 meters thick. The length of the fortress is 200-210 meters from east to west, and its width is 20-25 meters from north-south direction (Mammadov, 1993: 39).

The presence of castle-type fortifications (Naringala) inside the fortress is one of the peculiarities of the medieval cities of Azerbaijan. There is a second fortress wall and larger towers on the highest peak of the mountain, where Gulustan fortress is also located (Mammadov, 1993: 40). Another difference of this fortress from other fortresses is that Ganjabasar Gulustan fortress, like Gulustan fortress of Shamakhi, was built on a high mountain far from the surrounding settlements.

The conclusion to be drawn about the date of construction of this fortress is that it was built for defensive purposes in the 12th century and later rebuilt in the 15th century (Mammadov, 1993: 39).

A.M.Mammadov, a scientist about the Shatal fortress, which played a decisive role in the defense of the city of Shatal in the south-eastern part of Rahimli village of Goranboy region (Mammadov, 1993: 37).

Comparing Beylagan and Shatal, A.M.Mammadov says that the size of the bricks of Shatal fortress walls is typical for the construction of the Sassanid period. Arif Mammadov, who made a comparative analysis of Gara Ahmadov's researches in the fortresses of Beylagan and steppe Aghdam, came to the conclusion that the walls of the first fortress of Shatal, which was contemporary with those fortresses, were similar or identical to them (Mammadov, 1993: 37).

Based on the above-mentioned scientific results of A.M.Mammadov and G.Ahmadov and the fact that the oldest cultural layer in the



city of Shatal belongs to the V-VIII centuries, we can say that the history of this fortress dates back to the V century.

At the beginning of the XI-XIII centuries, in connection with the development of the city of Shatal, the fortress walls were strengthened to strengthen its defense (Mammadov, 1993: 37).

The monument, which was included in the scientific literature under the name of I Kurakchay fortress, is located near Hazirahmedli village in Goranboy region. The walls of these monuments of the early medieval period were built of raw bricks measuring 49x40x17 cm. (Mammadov, 2005: 36). The size of the bricks is typical of the early medieval period, built of raw bricks. These bricks are made of a mixture of silt-colored soil and straw, popularly known as white soil, which is abundant in the Goranboy area and is used today as a building material in construction.

A.M.Mammadov, who was engaged in the study of the monument, attributed this fortress to the III-VIII centuries (Mammadov, 2005: 73-75).

Kurakchay fortress II, located in Garadaghli village of Goranboy region, is on a hill on the bank of the river of the same name (Mammadov, 2005: 73-75). The castle is surrounded by two walls with a distance of 5 meters between the walls. The human bones arranged irregularly between these walls are probably the bones of people who died defending the fortress during the attack (Fig. 6).

The height of the castle walls, which have been preserved until our time, is 1.5 meters on the outside and 0.5 meters on the inside. The scientist A.M.Mammadov, who conducted the last archeological researches in the area in 2003-2004, says that the entrance to the sewer thrown from the inside of the fortress towards Kurekchay faces the gate of the fortress. The fact that the entrance to the sewer, which passes under the Kurekchay and goes to the other shore, is in the eastern direction is explained by the fact that sunlight can fall into it. Reinforcement works have even been carried out in some parts of the sewer to prevent water from leaking into it. Archaeologist A.M.Mammadov, who completely completed the archeological research of the monument, attributed the II Kurakchay fortress to the III-XIV centuries (Mammadov, 2005: 73-75).

R.B.Goyushov (Goyushov, 1964: 148-149) was the first to study the Chilaburd fortress built

on hard rocks on the bank of the river Tartar, 80 meters above the riverbed, in the territory of Chilaburd village of Tartar region in 1964, and Sh. I.Mehdiyev (Mehdiyev, 1994: 81-82) were engaged.

The only entrance to the Chilaburd fortress, which was surrounded on three sides by a river, was on the east side at the confluence of the Tartar River and its left tributary, the Toragay River. Researcher Sh.I.Mehdiyev states that according to the relief, the walls of the fortress are double, 8-9 meters in some places and 2.5 meters in others. River stones and rock fragments were used as construction materials in the construction of the fortress. The scientist notes that an underground road (sewer) was built from the center of the fortress to reach the banks of the Tartar River. The last researcher of the archeological monument, Sh.I.Mehdiyev, states that Chilaburd fortress was used for protection in the IX-X centuries and in the Classical Middle Ages (Mehdiyev, 1994: 82).

The Govurgala monument, which is one of the magnificent fortresses of the early Middle Ages, is located on the slope of the mountain at the confluence of the Akhurachay and Havushchay rivers in the territory of the Akhura village of the Sharur (Nakhchivan) region. V.Bakhshaliyev and A.Novruzlu conducted the first exploratory researches of this monument in 1990 and determined that it was built of large stones, with a large area, an elongated planar castle wall and 4 collapsed tower-type construction remains from all directions. It is a fortified monument surrounded by strong walls.

Due to the fact that different sources provide information about the fortress of Shishtepe (Srxab), there are conflicting views on its localization. It is impossible to agree with the idea of sometimes equating the Srkhab fortress with the Surkhay fortress. S.M.Hajiyev localizes the town of Srkhab north of Kukel village of Agdash region, near Turyanchay settlement.

The Srkhab fortress, where archeological researches were carried out during the years of independence, is also very important. Srkhab fortress is located in two areas: Shishtepe and Kondalandag. The site of the monument is 200 m long and 25-30 m wide. Each side of the mountain is a steep cliff. On the top of the mountain there is a remnant of a stone wall made of lime mortar with a length of 5 m and a height of 2 m. The underground fortifications

dug inside the mountain in the Srkhab fortress are of interest. Shishtepe is the highest peak of the Bozdag range. There is a ravine between Shishtepe and the main part of the fortress with underground fortifications (Aliyev, 2017).

The parallel walls of the Beshbarmag are shown in some studies as the Khursan rock. It is said that he separated Khursan country from Shirvan province. Pebble stone, rock, clay, etc. used in the construction of the remains of the castle wall. The building material made it durable. Studies confirm that the monument is an urban settlement of the late early medieval period.

Archaeological excavations at the Gungormaz Defense Fortress show that the monument consists of two parts. The first is an internal defense fortress (Naryn gala) covering an area of 4-5 hectares, and the second is a defense fortress of 35-40 hectares. In general, most of the monument consists of bare rocks. The first fortress is surrounded on three sides by steep natural mountains. Only on the north-eastern side a defensive fortification was built. The locals remember this fortress by two names. Flat pile and round pile. There are the remains of the tomb building in the round pile. According to local residents, the tomb was demolished in the early twentieth century, and a mosque was built from its stones in the village of Yanig-Gubali. The mosque is still operating today. The size and carving of its stones are very similar to the stones of the Broken Pir monument. It is possible that these tombs were built at the same time, and later the tomb in Yumru Pile was demolished. In the area called "flat pile" there are the remains of a settlement called a village. The river flows on the southwest side of this fortress. Observations show that there is a secret waterway from the area called the village to the river bank. About 15-20 m above the riverbed, three adjacent ravines were opened in the middle of the mountain. The ravine in the middle is slightly larger than the outside.

The remains of the studied tower are sloping because they are built in accordance with the relief of the fortress. The castle walls from the south-west occupy the middle part of the room. The rooms are located to the east, to the edge of the mountain. 3 giant stones were used in the lower part of the remains of the studied room. The wall from the north-east is not connected by a triangular shape, (see plan) both sides of

the wall are very neatly built on both sides. The defensive wall is attached to the middle part of the tower. In the lower part of both rooms large volumes were used, and in the upper part only smooth and flat stones were used (Fig. 4).

Dalma castle. In the 90s of the XX century and the beginning of the XXI century, B.Ibrahimli conducted archeological excavations in the eastern half and central part of the Dalma fortress. It was determined that the rooms with an area of 25-30 square meters and a width of 60-80 cm were designed adjacent to the defensive wall of the fortress from the inside. The walls of the pastures survived at a height of 0.8-1.2 m. There are no window seats. Probably these rooms had only a door and a chimney. The fact that the rooms have a closed plan structure, which is adjacent to the fortress wall, and the geographical location of the fortress itself suggest that the fortress was used as a dungeon (Ibrahimli, 2013: 290).

As a result of archaeological excavations carried out in the area of 560 m² of Dalma fortress in 2012, it became clear that the defensive wall of the fortress is made of rocks, the lower part of the wall and the foundation are made of large stones, 2-2.5 meters wide. The total length of the defensive walls (17.6 meters on the east side, 9 meters on the west side and 102.1 meters on the north side) is 128.7 meters on the south side (Ibrahimli, 2013: 292).

Archaeological excavations continued in 2013. The eastern side of room N 1 (5.75 m) is the eastern defensive wall of the fortress, and the northern side (6.3 m) is the northern defensive wall. During archeological excavations, 1.5 m wide and 0.7 m high stone line was found in the room along the eastern defensive wall. Above the safa, near the south-eastern corner of the room, there is a circular building with a height of 35-40 cm. neatly designed with rocks of different sizes. To the west of this building, the remains of a tandoor were found on the floor. The body of the oven is 15-20 cm high and the thickness of the body is 1.8-2.3 cm. There was a layer of ash 14-15 cm thick inside (Fig. 5).

In 2014, an excavation area of 20x15 m (300 m²) was excavated in the central part of the fortress. What distinguishes the center of the fortress from the eastern and western parts is its natural height of 4-5 m. This height was skillfully used by the builders of the fortress.

Excavations in the central part of the fortress



suggest that the chief and guards of the fortress lived here. Although some elements (buttresses, doors) were single in the construction of the tower, symmetry was observed. Thus, the door, buttress and the main building are located in the center of the castle. The width of the northern wall is 2.5 m, and the width of the eastern and western walls is 3.5 m (Ibrahimli, 2013).

RESULT.

Archaeological excavations prove scientific point of view about medieval fortifications,

fortresses and castles of Azerbaijan. Unearthed archaeological materials were studied and stratigraphy of the fortifications researched by archaeologists. Eventually we had got some scientific information about medieval fortifications of Azerbaijan, results give as an opportunity to say periodically Early Medieval, and Classical Period of Middle Ages, and also Late Medieval monuments are studied by archaeologists of Azerbaijan.

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Figure 1. Chiraggala castle (A.A.Aliyev)



Figure 2. Gulistan castle (A.Guliyev)

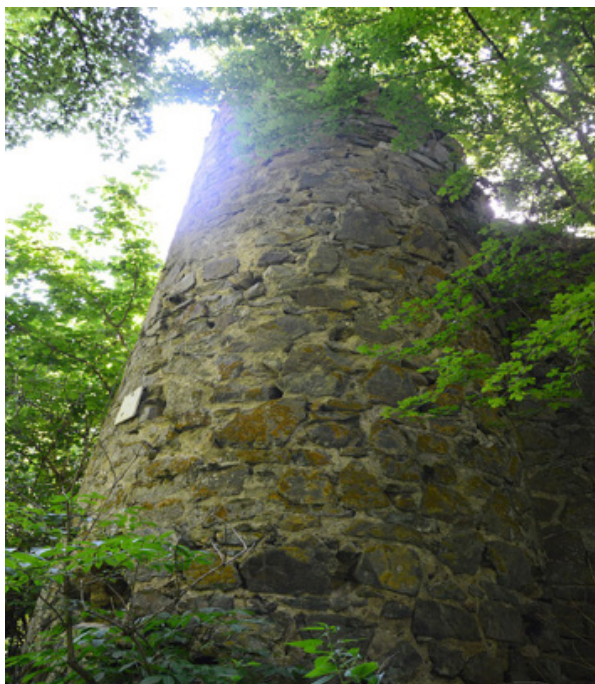


Figure 3. Zurnabad castle (A.M.Mammadov)



Figure 4. Gungormaz defensive fortress (Sh.Ahmedov)



Figure 5. Dalma castle (B.I.Ibrahimli)

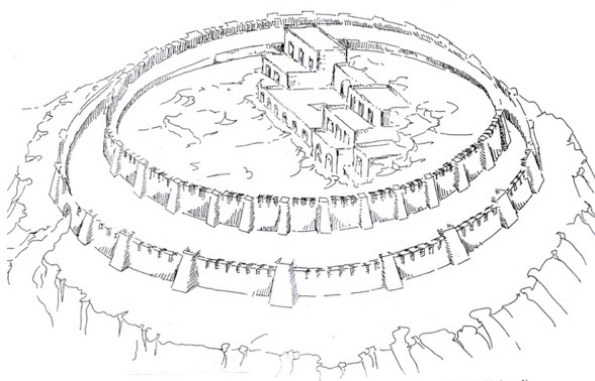


Figure 5. Dalma castle (B.I.Ibrahimli)



Figure 7. Gulistan castle (A.M.Mammadov)

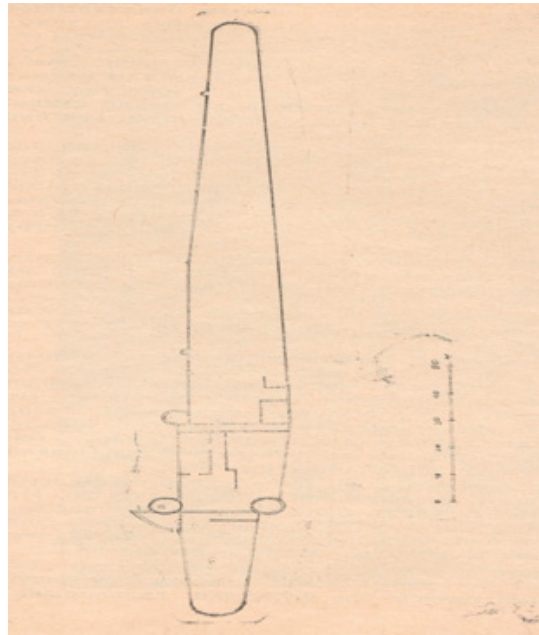


Figure 9. Plan of Gulistan castle (A.M.Mammadov)



Figure 8. Graphical description of Gulistan castle (A.M.Mammadov)



Figure 10. Map of Medieval fortresses of Azerbaijan (J.Giyasi)